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Missing intelligence

Admiral Stansfield Turner, head of the CIA, says that while his intelligence gathering agency may have failed to predict the revolution in Iran nobody else did, either.

We hope that is not the yardstick by which the CIA is run these days. It's bad enough to have the Admiral saying on TV that the CIA is not yet in the Avis category and will have to try harder even to become Number Two. To assume that all's going well with the world because nobody else is suggesting otherwise seems a naive basis on which to conduct an intelligence operation.

As it happens, somebody else did know better. Israel's Director of Military Intelligence, working on the same U.S. intelligence reports from Teheran to Washington that the CIA misinterpreted, reached the opposite conclusion, and Israel immediately began buying Mexican and Norwegian oil.

What is more, Israel's Foreign Minister Dayan, on the very eve of the Camp David Summit last September, passed Israel's intelligence conclusions on to the highest U.S. official. He was ignored.